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The marikmo-maraitcha reciprocation is far less powerful than the wawa-yukiyuko or bapa-gatu relationship. The female marikmo is seldom considered at all. A marikmo diramo is of more importance to a maraitcha diramo after death than before. It is largely because of this post-mortem relationship that the living tie is of importance.

A spirit child comes from the water hole of the clan where the spirit of the dead marikmo is. This marikmo takes a special interest in the unborn child. A maraitcha receives some of his names, including all his totemic names, from his marikmo diramo. A maraitcha mielk receives her names from her female marikmo and mari.

When a man dies, the spirit of his marikmo comes out of the well for him, and takes the dead man's good soul[10] back to the well whence it had come as a spirit child. When a man lies dying, the spirit of marikmo (also mari) comes to his maraitcha and calls for the spirit to come out and join him. The natives believe that sometimes just as the man dies, while the heart is still beating, the marikmo's spirit enters the heart, and that is why the heart continues to beat. He then takes the soul of the dead man out of the heart and leaves for the other world through the dead man's mouth. Frequently, the spirit of a dead marikmo fights with the mokoi (the evil ghosts who live in jungles) for the spirit of the dead man, for they claim it as theirs. The father and others paint the body of the dead man or woman with the design of the totemic water hole and sing a totemic song so that marikmo can hear and lead his maraitcha to the totemic well and save it from the attacks of the mokoi.

When the bones are exhumed the women carry them for a time. A marikmo mielk helps in this, but her participation is small and of little importance.

A marikmo diramo has a claim on a man's canoe. Both male and female marikmo seem to acquire what powers they have because they are in the patrilineal line and are pale reflections of the father.

Mokul Bapa ⟷ *Gatu* (diramo and mielk) (father's sister ⟷ brother's child)

The varieties of mokul bapa correspond to those of bapa. The mokul bapa, say the natives, is a kind of female father. No taboos surround her relations with gatu except the ordinary restrictions between men and women of the same moiety. Gatu diramo looks upon her not only as a sister to his father, but also as a mother of his dué, a most important person.

[10] Birimbir, warro; see Glossary of Native Terms.

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614 tant person. Gatu mielk sees her as a possible mother of her husband and, with marriage matters definitely settled, would make presents to her as such. Husband's mother and son's wife are usually together after the second year of marriage. Gatu diramo would always go to his mokul bapa among others for food if he were hungry.

604 When a man dies and his father is exhuming his bones, all the other women relatives are kept back of a windbreak and forbidden to have 562 a full view of the proceedings; but mokul bapa is allowed to stand by 765 the men and watch, occupying in a lesser degree the position her brother holds in this respect. Further, she, among others, is given the bones of her dead gatu to carry before they are finally put into a hollow log coffin.

604 She occupies as an individual the same position as the father's brothers, who also call their brother's children sons and daughters. She belongs to the same generation and patrilineal line as father's brothers and except for sex she is in every respect the same as they; her brother's children treat her with the respect due their fathers. A better understanding of her position can be gained by examining the relations of brother and sister.

605 So far we have discussed only the social personalities in ego's own patrilineal line. We now turn to two new lines of descent—the alternating dué-waku line which terminates in the term kaminyer; and the momo-nati and arndi-gawel line found, with galle added, in ego's own generation and the second descending generation.

Dué ⟷ *Galle* (diramo and mielk) (father's sister's child ⟷ mother's brother's child)

This reciprocal has four varieties: (1) dué (man) and galle (woman); (2) dué (man) and galle (man); (3) dué (woman) and galle (woman); and (4) dué (woman) and galle (man).

There are five varieties of the first relationship: (1) cohabiting galle and dué who are actually father's sister's sons and mother's brother's daughters; (2) cohabiting galle and dué who are from more distant clans; (3) actual father's sister's sons and mother's brother's daughters who are married to other dué and galle; (4) galle and dué from the same clan as the father's sister's husband and mother's brother; and (5) galle and dué from more remote clans.

605 The dué diramo and galle mielk relationship regulates the greater 595 part of sexual behavior. The basic idea that a man may have an indefinite number of wives but a woman only one husband at a time

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For a few days a mother carries her newborn child under her arm in a strip of paper bark. At this time she covers it with charcoal to make it turn black, for it is very light when born and it is thought that it will stay that color unless so painted. In a short time she holds her infant on her shoulder, its legs straddling her neck and its arms clinging to her head. She carries her children out into the bush with her while she gathers the plants, or shell food, for the family larder. When the little boy is about four years old he stays in camp with the other little ones. But the young girls continue going with their mothers, who during this early period start teaching them the countless things they must know about the fauna and flora, the land and the sea, in order to become good food-gatherers. When a boy is to be circumcised the mother always makes presents to the man who paints his body for the ceremony. When the son kills his first kangaroo or emu, the bones are painted and she carries them as she does those of a dead relative. This is to bring the son good luck in the hunt.

If the son's fathers are dead, the mother is sometimes consulted as to the proper time to circumcise him. When the boy returns from his journey to all the local clans, inviting them to come to his circumcision ceremony, it is she who brags about the number of presents given him. She always exaggerates because it is felt that this will also be helpful for the son in acquiring the good things in later life. While he is being circumcised she cries and beats herself. The actions are customary, but they are more than that to the mother, who is deeply affected when she hears her son's cries. The sisters to the mother act in the same way during this ceremony. A mother seldom corrects her child, this being left for mari and nati to do.

When a child is hurt or dead a mother always cuts and beats her head to show her grief. After the child is buried she paints herself with red ocher to cleanse herself of ceremonial impurity so that she can go out for wood and food with the other women. She waits until after burial to paint herself because the body would not decompose if she did it before. After the bones have been prepared for dispersal among the women she is one of the carriers and is usually the first to get them.

The child sees the mother's sisters as arndi not only because they are her sisters but because the father may die and the mother will be transferred to a younger brother of the father, or an older brother may die and his wives will be given to the child's father. In both cases the women would be arndi as wives to the child's father.

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view of their totem. This was to put him off his guard; a few days later they ambushed and killed him. 688

If one of the members of a clan breaks a number of the ritualistic taboos he is seldom killed by members of his own clan. Usually the old men arrange for his death by members of another clan. If such offenses went unpunished the whole structure of Murngin society would fall to pieces, since in time the women and children would be aware of the secrets of the men's associations, and with the knowledge common, the ceremonial ideas would lose their significance. 688 696

Should a young man make a totemic emblem without the permission of the clan's ceremonial leader, the usual method of dealing with this insult to the clan would be to kill him. 688

The finding of the first wild bees' nest, because of its magical significance, is a very important matter to a young boy. Should an older man eat any of it or not allow the boy to consume the honey that was found, the father and father-in-law of the boy would start a camp fight with the man's group. 688 628

At the beginning of the dry season all the underbrush is burned off to secure better hunting, frequently destroying a log coffin. The dead man's clan is always offended, but killing seldom results, for the deed is felt to have been accidental, and no strong feeling surrounds the bones of a dead man. 688 673

The use of obscenity and profanity against a man always results in a camp fight. Profanity usually reflects not only on the man but on his clan and carries an incestuous connotation. Occasionally quarrels result from an unfair division of the game killed in the hunt, but not always open warfare, since those who feel they had a right to the game are near relatives whose solidarity is too strong to allow fighting. 578

Adulteries may cause a husband to give only his wife a thorough beating, but usually the lover is also held responsible and a fight is a consequence. The fights are ordinarily of the nirimaoi-yolno (a fight within the camp) type. If the lover attempts to steal her the more serious narrup (secret killing) and maringo (night attack on a camp) are used, because wife-stealing is a much more serious offense. 684

A number of customs attend these killings that serve as causes for war. When the body of a man killed in a fight or by magic is disinterred, the finger bones are given both to the near relatives of the victim's clan and to related groups as relics to remind them of their duty of blood vengeance. The relic is wrapped with fiber string and covered with beeswax and parrot feathers. It is placed at the bottom 765 628

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of the man's personal basket. A piece of a spear that has been broken off and left in the body of the victim is also used as a relic. When a man has been wounded he sometimes soaks pieces of paper bark in his blood and presents them to his relatives to be used as reminders of their duty to compensate him for his injury by helping him kill or wound a member of the offending man's clan. When a man obtains one of the relics, it is an almost absolute demand on him to kill a member of the slayer's group. This is particularly true if it is given to a young man. The older men usually give their relics to the younger males.

The spirit of the dead is supposed to go with the relic, and the relic has magic power. It can be thrown into an intended victim's fire and cause him to go to sleep, or the possessor can blow his breath against it and produce the same effect. It is often carried in the mouth during a battle to make an opponent tired and heavy-footed and to prevent him from dodging spears. Relics play a prominent part in all feuds.

Occasionally men are killed within the clan, but this is not a cause for war or retaliation by members of the clan or by near relatives from without the clan. A man may be such a notorious killer and cause so much trouble for his own clansmen that the entire group will kill him to stop further disturbances. At times men are slain by their own clan for breaking ceremonial taboos, such as divulging secrets of the old men to the women or the uninitiated, and for viewing ceremonial objects before their initiation.

If a fight is on and a near relative is accidentally hit by a club or spear, the person responsible hits himself on the head while saying he is sorry. Here, too, the underlying idea is to inflict an injury on the responsible person similar to the one the injured party suffered.

Military honor also contributes its share to the causes for war. A man will brave the spears of a whole clan to demonstrate his fearlessness. The writer has seen two brothers defy fifteen men in a spear fight. The Murngin people are a brave and courageous group. Fear of death while in a fight is seldom seen. A man who shows an unwillingness to fight is called a woman and held in extreme contempt.

The fundamental principle underlying all the causes of Murngin warfare is that of reciprocity: if a harm has been done to an individual or a group, it is felt by the injured people that they must repay the ones who have harmed them by an injury that at least equals the one they have suffered. When the total cultural situation of Murngin life is further examined, this negative reciprocation is found to fit into a

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628 for women, has made them very friendly, and there is a considerable solidarity in the activities of the two groups.

A few years following the last killing recounted here, Warlumbopo's brother and his son, Danginbir, went up to the Murderpa clan's highland country for a visit. They were taking the usual route to the Blue Mud Bay seacoast. When they arrived an old Murderpa man told his sons, "You go kill Danginbir's father." He wanted this done because the father-in-law of [765] the Darlwongo who had been killed had sent him as a present a red parrot belt made from the hair of the dead man. It was maraiin, had as much power as a totemic emblem, and was therefore taboo and feared. The old Murderpa felt ashamed when he saw it, since no one had avenged the death of the owner of the hair; he made the Darlwongo quarrel his own. (It is highly likely that there was already a considerable background of antagonism between the Murderpa and the enemies of the Darlwongo.)[4]

He took Danginbir to a paper-bark tree jungle on an expedition for yams. The young Murderpa accompanied the father on another route.

The old Murderpa, Kamata by name, sharpened his axe. It, too, had been the property of the dead Darlwongo and had later been transferred to the father-in-law, now deceased, who in turn had sent it as further pressure on the Murderpa to help him avenge the taking of his son-in-law's life by killing the Ritarngo.

As Kamata sharpened his axe, Danginbir grew suspicious. He asked, "Why are you sharpening that tomahawk?"

"I am going to look for a wild bees' nest," said Kamata.

It was late morning and they had already gathered some yams and killed some small game. They made a fire and cooked and ate their food. They slept.

The Murderpa only pretended to sleep, and when everyone else was deep in slumber he stealthily arose and hit Danginbir on the back of the neck. He severed Danginbir's head from his body. The Murderpa threw the head and body into the river.

Meanwhile the boy's father and the other Murderpa had gathered a good quantity of yams. A Murderpa picked up his spear and said, "I am going to look for some kangaroo. You pick up the yams and take them back to camp." He hooked his spear to his spear-thrower, and while the man who was carrying the yams walked toward camp he sneaked up behind him and speared him in the back. He did not succeed in killing him, for the wounded man dropped his burden and ran toward camp. The Murderpa stopped and picked up the yams that were dropped and did not follow. When the old man arrived in camp he said, "Where is my son?"

Someone said, "He has been killed."

[4] There is less information recorded by the writer on this matter because the Murderpa group lay at the farther end of the Murngin country.

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sang the water song of their clan well to another older brother, Daurlung, and thereby told him of their elder brother's death, since the name of the dead is taboo. Daurlung cried. After he had finished he said, "We will get all our Ritarngo people and go fight the Marderpa." 628

"No," said Warlumbopo. He had not told his brother of what he had done to avenge their older brother's death, because he believed Daurlung was a good friend to the man he had killed, and he wanted first to tell the whole story. When Daurlung heard that his friend (a distant tribal younger brother) had not tried to save the lives of his own brother and son, he was very angry. He said, "We will go kill that one first."

Warlumbopo said quietly, "You cannot kill him now."

"Why?"

"He is dead."

"Who killed him?"

"I did."

"My own brother!" said Daurlung. "Good! I shall give you two of my wives." He then gave Warlumbopo two of his wives to show his appreciation.

This ends the episode of Blue Mud Bay.

Meanwhile rivalry for women among certain clans had caused another feud to continue between the Djirin and the Naladaer on one side and the Gwiyula on the other. The Daiuror clan, which is closely related to the former two by marriage, always sided with them in a dispute, but the Gwiyula usually had much the best of the fighting for their clan had two of the most feared and deadly fighters, known throughout the tribes of the eastern Arafura Sea. They are Parpar and Drona (the kangaroo-legged one), who has a deformed leg.

Parpar, about fifteen years ago, killed Djingaran, a Djirin clansman, the father of Maiangula, for revenge in a narrup fight. Maritja, a son of Djingaran's brother and a member of the Djirin clan, a few years later killed a Gwiyula in a maringo fight. Parpar and Drona then killed several Naladaer people, including Ginda, the brother of Berundais, who will be mentioned with Maiangula a little later in this story. They also wounded Waltjimi, a member of the Daiuror clan.

They put the corpse of Berundais' brother in a tree. Djowa and a number of his people some few months later cleaned the bones and took them away. Djowa found the spear head with the skeleton. He wrapped it with paper bark and fiber string, as is always done with such relics, and put it in his basket. All the members of the party that gathered the bones received one or more small bones as relics. 628 765

Djowa and Berundais kept the spear in their baskets. A short time after this they conferred and decided to transfer it to someone else. They gave it to Watia (Liagaomir clan). Watia kept the relic for a considerable period

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628 of time and finally, tired of having it in his possession, presented it to
765 Bengaliwe (Djirin clan). He said, "This comes from Drona and Parpar. You can do something about this, for I am tired." Time passed and Bengaliwe also lost interest in the relic. The killing had occurred so long before the time of his possession that it did not have great emotional interest for him. He even considered throwing it away, but it still remained in his personal basket. One day Balliman (Djirin clan) looked into his relative's basket. He saw the relic wrapped in the fiber string and, since he was still a very young man, his curiosity was aroused to the point of his asking Bengaliwe what it meant. Bengaliwe said, "That belongs to you people. It comes from Parpar's brother." Since the Naladaer and Djirin clansmen are considered more or less one people, for the Naladaer has a very undifferentiated existence from the Djirin, the statement of Bengaliwe was true.

Balliman's interest was aroused. He was a natural fighter, and always keen on organizing an expedition to fight someone, no matter what the cause. He went to his near brother, a member of the Djirin clan, Maiangula, and said, "I have something here for you. It is an old gatu [son]. It belongs to us. The spear that killed him is in Bengaliwe's basket." Maiangula, a large man of a more or less even temperament, said, "What do you think we had better do? Do you think we ought to steal it away from Bengaliwe? He can't go fight them for that. His people are too near relatives to them for him to fight Parpar and Drona. They are like one people."

Maiangula then went to see Bengaliwe and was given the relic.

628 Maiangula had been a small boy when his father was killed, so he had done nothing at the time to avenge his father's death. About three years before he received the relic from Bengaliwe and about two years after the killing of Ginda, the Naladaer, Waltjimi, the war leader of the Daiuror group, who was Maiangula's father-in-law, said to the young man, "You have a spear head, Maiangula, that was found in the body of Ginda when we painted his body with red ocher and took it from the tree. He was my waku [son-in-law]. You go kill Parpar and Drona and I will give you one of my daughters for a present to become your wife."

628 After a conference, Maritja, the leader of the Djirin, agreed to head the
672 party. He agreed to go on the expedition only after he had stipulated that Parpar and Drona be the only two men killed, since they were such notorious killers that there was a general feeling among the older men throughout north Arnhem Land that the clan to which the two belonged should not be held responsible for their behavior. This feeling, however, became uppermost in the minds of the old men only at those times when they were most philosophical and there had been no recent slaying, for during their more emotional states they felt that the whole clan should be destroyed. Maiangula and the younger men, although agreeing to this

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any uncleanliness which might cause sickness and death. The group baptism in the Narra ceremonies is explicitly considered by the Murngin to be a method of preventing illness and a way of washing away the ritual uncleanliness which causes it. Participation in the Gunabibi has the exact opposite effect to non-participation, since it too prevents sickness and death of the individuals who are a part of it. The whole mourning ceremony is consciously an effort to prevent sickness from occurring to any of the members of the group by forcing the contagious soul away from the land of the living and into the land of the dead.

The Nature of Murngin Dal (Mana or Power)

Murngin mana which lies in the rituals is both helpful and harmful. Those things which are powerful and strong because of an extramundane quality are said to be *dal*, which means they have mana and possess spiritual power.

Objects Which Are Dal Because of Primary Relationship with the Totem.—A catalogue of the elements in Murngin society which are dal indicates that all the objects within their material culture can be dal provided they have been given a power name by someone who has the right to give it. Old men are the only ones who know and can use these sacred names. Most of the objects in the material culture which possess the dal quality have it only because of the power name. Dal names fit into the general classification of "inside," while ordinary words in daily use are "outside." The men's sacred camp, the place where all the sacred totemic rituals are held, is described as "inside," the common camp as "outside." The water in the clan well is considered common, ordinary, and outside, whereas the subterranean water down below, where the totems and the ancient ancestors live, is inside. All the very sacred rituals are inside, while the ordinary garma type is outside. The totem, totemic emblems, totemic ancestors and ceremonial objects are all dal. All the objects, then, which have the quality of dal may or may not be sacred in their own right, but in all cases they obtain their power because of a special connection with the inside or sacred.

Objects Which Are Dal Because Connected with the Dead.—Another category of objects is also classed as dal, but the items in this group are not necessarily associated with a totem in a primary relationship. These objects include the bones of a man killed directly by black magic or by an enemy clansman, pieces of a spear found in a wound of a dead clansman, bark or wood saturated in his death's

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blood, the heart's blood of a man or woman killed by magic, a hair belt from the head of a dead man, a gondjurma or killing stick used to puncture the heart of a sorcerer's victim, the body of a dead man, a burial platform where a body formerly lay but which has since been removed, the warro or soul which goes to the totemic well, and the mokoi or trickster soul. All of these items have a common element, namely, they are associated with the dead. Each one is directly and primarily related to some aspect of death. The dead, too, are looked upon as "inside," particularly because very shortly after death the sacred totemic emblem is placed upon the body of the dead. Women can no longer look at the corpse, which is immediately wrapped with paper bark and completely covered, exactly like a totemic object. The paper bark is now "outside" and something that the women can look at, while the dead, with the sacred emblem upon it, is now "inside" and dal. The dead belong to the world of the sacred (see mourning rites), and these objects, by their primary association with the dead, partake of this power.

Dal Magicians' Paraphernalia, and Relics.—A third category of dal objects—the paraphernalia of the magician and relics used by the ordinary man to give him extra-mundane aid in his hunting or fishing—are actually only a subdivision of the preceding category, since the power of magicians and the power of relics find their source in the sacredness of the dead.

The heart's blood of a man whose soul has been stolen by a magician is saved, and it often turns up in the hands of a magician or an ordinary layman in the form of a kind of resin, which is supposed to be the hardened blood. This can be used in fighting to give a little extra power, and in hunting or fishing it is used the same way as the shavings of a killing stick, to be described presently. Sometimes the heart's blood is placed inside the white magician's spirit bag to give it extra power. This blood gains extra mana by passing through the possession of a number of people and usually is traded in from more remote regions in the south.

When the body of a man killed by magic or in a spear fight is disinterred and the flesh removed from the bones, the finger bones are often distributed as relics among the clansmen and near relatives. These relics are wrapped in string and placed carefully in the possessor's dilly bag as reminders of the crime they feel has been commited. This is also true of pieces of the spear which remain in the body, and of pieces of bark or wood which the dying man may soak in his blood

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and present to his relatives as reminders. The power which these relics possess is due to the soul of the dead following the bones. The soul is a true or totem-well warro. It listens from the totem well and comes when it is needed for an avenging expedition or to help its possessor in time of trouble. Any account of a clan feud is always filled with the use of these relics. Usually, when a maringo expedition is starting, a magical ceremony is gone through by the avenging group in which the bone of the dead plays the central rôle and decidedly helps to a successful conclusion. The gondjurma or killing stick used by the black magician to puncture the heart of his victim has great power, first, because it is associated with the dead body, second, because it is believed that the souls of the victims cluster about the point, and third, because it gains power by passing through the hands of a great number of men as it is traded from clan to clan and from tribe to tribe. The soul which adheres to this magic is also the Wongar one. It is like a friend to its possessor and he is its master. All of these souls are in or on the stick and can be called for help in hunting or fishing. They will also come to a man when he dreams. They will help foretell the future for him. If he is to be ill, he will feel something pricking him like the end of the stick. If good things are going to happen, one of the souls will come and tell him. If a stick is supposed to have killed a large number of men, all of the souls are supposed to be with it, but actually they are looked upon as one, and it is not so much an individual soul as a kind of diffused power or mana. A killing stick can be in the possession of a magician, or he can give it to an ordinary man who is one of his friends. Such a stick is always kept wrapped in paper bark and covered just as though it were a totemic emblem or ceremonial object and must not be subjected to the profane sight of women or the uninitiated.

When a man wishes to obtain its power to help him in hunting he scrapes off pieces, chews them and swallows them the night before the hunt. Immediately afterwards he shuts his eyes, says nothing, and goes to bed. Next morning he utters not a sound and goes out with his spears looking for game or for fish. "Those souls which the stick killed before this have gone into the water or out into the bush and they have stopped the fish and game so that they can be found. When the man arrives he sees a few. He spits in the water (he is fishing) and a lot of fish come there. He spears one fish and when he spears the one all the rest go dead as if you had poison in the water."

If he were hunting kangaroo it would be impossible for him to miss,

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but he could kill only one, even though there were a herd of kangaroo there. The taboo of silence is placed on the man from the time he eats the gondjurma shavings until he is successful in the hunt "because it means you have the soul inside you and when you spit it goes out into the water. You can't talk or it would send him out before."

"One time," said an informant who had in his possession a killing stick he intended using, "I was down at the creek trying to catch fish. When I got there I saw Bang-gi-la. He had one of these sticks with him. He was ready to try it when I got there. He had not used fish poison. I looked at the end of the stick. It had been scraped. While I stood there the fish came to the top and were dead. I am going to try mine."

The dry heart's blood can be used in the same way and the magical process is exactly the same. "Wet blood is no good because it makes you sick. When you take wet blood you must keep it until it gets dry."

The stick insect, a creature which looks much like a praying mantis and is one of the minor totems among the western clans of the Dua moiety, is associated with the killing stick primarily because it has a stick-like shape. It is believed that dead souls are about it, and at times it is called wan-djuk by the western peoples, which means black magician. Its correct name is war-a-la war-a-la. It is believed that the warala warala sometimes helps sneak up on people and kill them. There is an ambivalent attitude taken toward this creature. The natives play with him when they see him hanging sluggishly to a limb, laugh at him, treat him rather roughly, yet in their more serious moments they speak of his association with black magic.

The power of the black magician and his technique and the power of relics used to harm one's enemies (a variety of black magic) find their source in the sacredness of the dead. It is the mana of the dead which gives this power to magic and which *is* this power. To the living, the greatest and most intense dysphoria which finds expression in the life of man is death. The more dead souls that cluster about the evil point of the killing stick, the more power the killing stick possesses; a punitive war expedition assures itself of success by the magic clustered in the power of the bone relic because the soul is with it. The ordinary living animal or fish is killed immediately by the magical power of the killing stick because the soul of the dead is associated with it. The dal of the magician is the dal of the dead. The relics express this same power because they are associated with the dead. A relic cannot kill, but it can remove many of the traits of the living

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and make a living man more like the dead. A man goes to sleep because a bone has been put in the fire by him and he is killed by his enemies (see the account of a clan feud in the war chapter). A man cannot run when chased by his enemies because one of them is blowing on a dead man's bone in his mouth, or an evil soul enters a man's head and makes him crazy, the power of the soul coming from that of the dead.

The two classes, that of the totem and of the dead, are but two varieties of one general type, for both of them belong to the world of the sacred. Their power is contagious and dangerous unless properly handled by ritual. The totem can cause sickness and death just as the power of the dead can produce these same effects.

The Behavior of the Individual and the Society When Magic Is Put into Effect

The isolation of the various elements in the particular social configuration surrounding the death of a victim of black magic may help illuminate the fundamental nature of Murngin magic and explain its potency and unusual effectiveness; and a general analysis of the group behavior under such a situation will be profitable.

When the supposed theft of a man's soul becomes general knowledge, the sustaining social fabric pulls away from the victim. The familiar attitudes of the kinship personalities change, the collaboration of the victim and his society, of which his social personality has always been an integral part, ceases. The group now acts with all the ramifications of its organization and with countless stimuli positively to suggest death to a suggestible individual. The ordinary daily activity of the victim's social life is removed. The society itself creates a situation which, if unchanged, makes it impossible for the individual to adjust himself to it even though he tried; and in addition he usually not only makes no effort to live and to remain part of his group but actually, through the multiple suggestions from it, cooperates in his withdrawal therefrom. He becomes what his society's attitudes make him, committing a kind of *suicide*. The social configuration in which he finds himself operating at this time is one of anomia[2] for him. His ordi-

[2] Emile Durkheim, *Le Suicide*, Librairie Felix Alcan, Paris, nouvel edition, 1930. In general, anomic suicide is a type supposed to be due to the change in the society which surrounds the individual and gives him a feeling of maladjustment and of being "lost." The change here, however, is more dynamic than one of process; that is, the society as a functioning structure regularly performs this act upon individuals whose souls have been stolen, rather than that the society changes in a structural way and becomes something different from what it was before and by so doing causes the indi-

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moments, there is little organization of the people to give general community expression. A kind of disorganization has occurred. The women wail, but it is not the organized wailing which one finds in some of the rituals. There is a hesitancy and uncertainty about the actions of the people. The more intense latent antagonisms rise to the surface and some of the relatives may be blamed for the death. For example, when a child dies it is often thought that the father and mother have had sexual intercourse during the later months of pregnancy, which are supposed to be a period of abstinence. The other relatives of the dead child express their antagonism by picking up their spears and attempting to throw them at the offending pair. In one sense this is an organized expression, since they well know that they will be prevented by other relatives from throwing the spears.

After the first wailing at the news of the spearing or sudden death of a member of the clan or of a near relative, a stillness comes over the camp which is very noticeable to anyone accustomed to the general noisiness of all the Murngin camps after dark when the people have eaten. It is at this quiet time that the people express their desires for revenge. A near relative throws a spear on the ground and lets everyone know that he is going to avenge the death, whether it has been caused by the spear of a known enemy or the black magic of an unknown antagonist.

The female relatives of the dead man cut their heads with stone knives or spears or sharp pointed sticks to show their great sorrow. The mothers, sisters, wives, and female maris are the relatives who show the greatest amount of grief and cut themselves the most. A few hours after the death of a man or woman the relatives belonging to his clan, led by the father if he is alive, paint the design of his clan well upon him. For example, if he were a Warumeri or Wangurri clansman he would have the duck well painted upon him. The painting and design are exactly the same as those placed on the body of a young boy when he is being circumcised, and on the body of an adolescent boy after he has seen his totemic emblem. Red ocher is painted all over the body first and then the totemic design is painted on the chest and abdomen and face. The hair is covered with white clay after most of it has been cut off or plucked out to be made into a sacred hair belt. "We pull out the hair of the dead man a few hours after he dies and put red ocher on his head after we do this. We make a hair belt from his hair and look for red parrot feathers to put on it.

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764 Any relative can make a hair belt for the dead man but the dead
765 man's brother gives that belt to their kutara or mari. Sometimes the
789 brother keeps it. That belt is very good in a fight. It makes you very strong. If you wear that one in a fight you can throw a spear that will go straight and kill that man you throw it at. This belt is good for ceremonies."

764 The painting, according to native thought, is so done that the old
775 ancestors can see which totem well the dead man belonged to and carry the soul immediately to its proper resting place. The old dead marikmo is supposed to announce loudly, "Oh, that is my young maraitcha." The evil mokois say, "No, this one belongs to us. We are going to take him." They argue about it, but the design upon the dead man definitely places him in the hands of his proper ancestors who prevent him from getting into the clutches of the evil mokois and take him back to his totem well.

[768] When a man dies his relatives move their camp some little distance away from the grave. Some of them call out, usually the mother, "If you want to see us you can come back now. Don't come back by and by." She is talking to the mokoi spirit rather than the warro spirit (soul) of the man. (See footnote, page 413.) When the mokoi spirit leaves the dead all the mokois of the many men who have died before make noises in the jungle. These evil spirits are calling out to this newly released spirit of the dead man. They make sounds as if they were coughing, for this is the way that mokois talk. They are saying, "Where is our son and our grandson?" The leader of the mourning ceremony calls out when these sounds are heard and the mokoi spirit of the dead man is supposed to come away from his body. The people carry fire sticks and go out to the jungle. There are two lines of them; they join in the center of the dance area, and the spirit is supposed to be in the sac-like space between them. The leader takes a fire stick from a man. He puts the fire stick against his chest and no one can see what he is doing. He runs and shows the fire. This is supposed to drive the spirit into the jungle and to finish his life with the living. It is thought by some that this is for the good soul and by other informants that this is for the bad soul, "and by some it is not believed at all." "We did that for Narnarngo's wife when she died. Marupila and I carried fire and we did not see that spirit. We said to ourselves, 'That whole thing is a lie. You can't see a mokoi that way.' Another time when I wanted to see a mokoi with my own eyes I tried at Elcho

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764 Two basins symbolic of totem wells are made over the grave by heaping up earth into two separate compartments with channels leading out from them. The wells represented are the dead man's and those of his nati, which means that they belong to both moieties, and both sides of the man's elementary family of orientation are symbolized. These wells are made for both the Yiritja and the Dua kinsmen to eat in. All the men of the nearby clans who are relatives of the dead gather there and eat the food that has been prepared in the camp. If anyone else attempted to eat there it would cause trouble among the near kin.

The putting up of the mast over the grave symbolizes the people telling the departed one a final goodbye. The grave post, in the eyes of the natives, "is just the same as the dead body. It means that you can look at the grave post and remember where the soul has gone." Grave posts are also put up in the camps which are far distant from the grave of the dead. Additional grave posts are erected if a man is felt [554] to be important. Children and women ordinarily would not have more than one grave post erected for them. Sometimes in the case of children no posts are erected. The grave posts of the Dua people are supposed to be symbolic of the two Wawilak sisters.

The grave of a child is usually placed within the main camp. The grave of an older person is usually at the edge of the camp. Sometimes 769 when the people have left a grave and gone to another place a chance 775 visitor who has not heard of the death arrives in the camp and discovers the grave. This makes matters difficult for him because he is liable to be followed and have tricks played on him by the mokoi of the dead person. There is a method, however, of fooling the evil spirit. The man who has been placed in this embarrassing position goes to a nearby tree and makes a small toy spear and spear-thrower and hides his own spears and spear-thrower in the bush. He takes the play spear and spear-thrower to the newly made grave and he addresses the mokoi, "Now don't you follow me. I am going to come back." He puts the spear and spear-thrower on the grave to prove that he will return, since no man would walk around in the bush without his spear-thrower and spears. The man then returns to his own spear and spear-thrower, and the mokoi, who has been fooled, does not follow him.

● 765 While the grave post is up and before the bones have been exhumed and placed in the hollow log, outsiders are not allowed in the immediate camp of the parents or near relatives of the deceased. At this time the house of the parents is burned, the garma dance is held,

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and outsiders are then allowed to enter the camp itself. The mother of the dead individual paints herself with red ocher, as does the female mari of the person. This is to remove the taboo from them so that they can go out and gather fire wood and water as well as food. Before that time they must stay in the camp. The mother is not supposed to paint herself before the grave post is put up. If she does, and puts water on herself to make the red ocher spread, the body of the dead person will not decompose but stay firm so that the bones cannot be painted and properly treated. "The mother that belongs to that dead man cries every night for him. She cries a long time, maybe until one rain is over. All the people go back now to take out that dead man. They take the paper bark off his body. It has a very strong smell. Some people don't like to see that, but some people have strong hearts. We keep the young people away and the women do not look."

Exhumation of the Bones.—After a minimum of two or three months or a maximum of a season the body is exhumed under the direction of the father or some near relative of the dead man. If it is a child and has been buried beside the house, the father pulls the house down and makes a windbreak with it. The women relatives sit on one side of the windbreak and men on the other. They sit so that the wind blows between the male and female lines. At the head of the grave a small fire is built out of wet material so that it will smoke. The smoking fire, with the aid of a strong wind, prevents the stench from being too heavy. It is believed that no one should walk through the smoke that comes from the fires and grave, for the stench of the dead would make him ill. The fires are lit not only to kill the smell of decaying flesh but also so that the wind won't blow the odor a great distance, for it is believed that the stench is consumed by the smoke. The windbreak acts as a screen in front of the women so that they cannot see what is taking place. If an adult is being disinterred the screen is placed in the same way, but the material is not from the house of the parents. The mokul bapa (father's sister) can and does sit on the side of the men.

Strips of paper bark are made ready on which to place the bones. The bark is cut into sections. The inside sections of the stringy-bark tree are broken into handfuls of waste with which to clean the bones, and water is brought in large melon shells.

The men sing the garma cycle of songs while the women dance to a monotonous syncopated rapid rhythm: alternately one arm touches the head, and the hand of the other arm is lowered to the abdo-

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men; the feet are alternately raised toward the opposite knee. The women stop dancing and sit down in a line back of the screen. All start crying, and with stone spears or any sharp instruments they may have in their hands hit their heads to the tempo of the dance. Hitting the head is purely ceremonial in the case of most of the women. The mother and female mari really cry, the mother going into a paroxysm of tears. The mokul bapa also cries and hits herself. The father or some other near relative, while all this is going on, is opening the grave while the chorus of men continues singing. As soon as the body is found in its paper-bark wrapping, an old woman is given a spear-thrower and dances from the line of women to the grave, using the spear-thrower as though it were a paddle, while another woman emerges from the line with a spear by her side, dances toward the open grave and thrusts the spear inside it. This is done twice or oftener. The body is then taken out of the grave and the covering removed. Two of the deceased's dués (father's sister's sons) clean the bones. The father pours the water over the putrid flesh to help cleanse them.

The flesh is taken off the feet first. The skin has turned white. The bones of the feet and then the leg bones are removed. When they come to the ribs the cleaners are particularly careful because they are over the heart; they are kept at times to give as relics to the relatives of the man who has been killed by spear magic. The backbone is removed next, then the lower jaw. The head is taken off and a stick is used to thrust into the occipital opening to clean out the putrid brains. Water is poured inside the skull to wash it out and clean it again. The shoulder and arm bones and hands are then cleaned and put in the paper bark. Some of the relatives prefer to take the finger bones as relics, rather than the rib bones, since they are smaller. The men say, "I want this bone to keep because I want to remember my dead relative. I am going to take this bone. I am going to take this bone because I am going to kill somebody in a little while."

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If the body has not started to rot it is often believed that the father and mother are the cause: they belonged to the same moiety and were incestuous. A man on the border line between two cultures, where the culture pattern was slightly confused, married a woman whom the natives of his tribe considered to be in his own moiety. They used to point to his children and say that their bodies would never rot. Even though the man had changed his own moiety when speaking of himself, it had no effect upon tribal opinion.

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The bones, after they have been washed, are placed in the paper bark and at the end of the ceremony tied up into a bundle. After the cleansing ceremony is over the father and the two dués paint themselves with red ocher so that they "won't stink" (have the soul about them).

When the grave is opened the chorus sings canoe, then paddling, which is a signal for the old woman to come out with the symbolic spear-thrower while imitating a man paddling a canoe. The chorus then sings whale hunter, harpoon, and rope. At this time the other woman sticks the "spear" in the body. The body is a whale. The whale is the totem emblem for the Warumeri. Before a man was on the earth two Wongar men went to the totem well of the Warumeri and kept hitting and hitting and cutting it up. Cutting up the whale is next sung. At this juncture in the singing the two dués start cleaning the bones. Sometimes when the grave is being opened and the bones cleaned some of the chorus of men walk around the ground imitating the actions of a dog and others call out like curlews.

The mast is removed after the exhumation and burned. Each clan at this period in the garma song cycle dances a different animal or plant. Warumeri dance the whale, the Wangurri a split mangrove wood, the Djirin the turtle, and the Liaalaomir the snake. This is also supposed to help the spirit depart to the other land and to take him out of his own society.

When the bones have been placed in the paper bark and wrapped up they are put by one of the men in the fork of a tree a short distance from the camp. It is late evening when he returns from the tree where he has placed the bones. Several men carrying fire stick brands meet him and escort him back to camp. The keeper of the bones of the dead man has bushes tied on each arm or he holds them in his hands and crosses them so that the bushes are on his chest. On the edge of the camp a brush house has been made for him. He enters and stays for the night and sometimes for a short time longer. He is not allowed out. The mother of the dead man gives him food and water and takes care of him. "He is just the same as a son of that old woman."

Men gather water in melon shells and obtain a supply of red ocher to make ready for his reappearance. They approach the hut and sit on one side of the doorway, the keeper of the bones on the other. The man puts red ocher on himself with the aid of the water. He remains one or two, sometimes three days longer, to let the newness of the red ocher wear off. Sometimes he leaves the house and moves to an-

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other house with some of his near relatives, and once more covers himself with red ocher. Meanwhile the old house is burned. He then returns and the people paint him as though he were going to be put through the circumcision ceremony. All the other relatives paint themselves with red ocher. This is particularly true of those in the patrilineal line, but the mother and wife also cover themselves. After a symbolical well is made, such as is described on page 419, the man who is in charge of the bones is supposed to give food to all of the above people.

He goes out and kills a supply of game; after it is cooked it is placed in the well, which is symbolic of the dead man's well. All the clansmen of the deceased also put in food. The man who is the keeper of the bones and who has cleaned them takes a stick and cleans out his finger nails into the hole. The finger nails are then cut off into the well. "This is to clean off that rotten flesh from his fingers and put it into the well." At this juncture of the ceremony, if the dead man is Yiritja, white maggots are sung; they are supposed to be flying away. If the man was Dua they sing the ants' larvae. Both songs symbolize change. Only the clansmen and near male relatives of the dead man can eat the food but everyone gathers about this communion.

The Hollow Log Coffin.—The keeper of the bones watches them for two or three months; then the brother of the dead man is supposed to go to him and tell him to bring the bones in. The bones are brought up to the edge of the camp, where red ocher is placed on them before they are ready to enter the main camp. The bones are placed in paper bark out in the sun and allowed to dry so that they will not smell and will have the odor of red ocher when they do arrive in camp. Frequently a small bark cylinder is made out of a stringy-bark tree and the totemic emblems of the dead man are painted upon it. The bark cylinder is really a preliminary coffin and is only smaller in size and lighter in material than the final hollow log receptacle in which the bones are placed at the end of the mortuary ceremony. The man who is carrying the bones at the time they are being painted at the edge of the camp puts red ocher on his arms and legs at the same time.

The singing at this point is split mangrove stick, which is the home for the mangrove fish, if the ceremony is Yiritja; if it is Dua, the singing is salt-water turtle. The men sing cutting up the turtle and throwing the bones away just as if the turtle were a man. They then dance mokoi, woman crying, and cockatoo, which are a part of the Nierk mokoi ceremony. The bones are then placed inside of the bark cylinder

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and the two ends are stuffed with grass. Sometimes red parrot feathers are stuck on it if the bones belong to a Dua man, and opossum string if to a Yiritja.

The women are off some distance from the men. The mother and female mari of the dead man dance a little to one side by themselves. The men dance up to the women and offer the bones to them. The women take them and return them to the men. This is repeated several times before the women finally stop dancing and accept the bones. The leader continues beating his singing sticks and still sings the garma songs. The men wail. The women take the bark coffin and place it in the forks of two sticks at the edge of the camp. The mother then takes the bones and carries them wrapped in paper bark for several months. (The custom of carrying the bones about is practiced only in the more central regions of the Murngin tribe and, according to my informants, is not found in the Wessel Island group among the Yaernungo.) Once more food is offered to the former keeper of the bones.

The Nierk or sulphur-crested cockatoo ceremony follows within the main camp. The principal participants in the ceremony paint themselves with white clay. The earth has been piled up into three small basins which lie side by side and represent the totem wells of the dead man and his relatives. Before the ceremony branches have been broken off the trees and placed in the well bottom to represent the leaves brought in by the tide or the spring floods. The wells are always placed under a large tree. The bones of the dead man and some of his personal property are placed within the circumferences of the three wells. During the dancing that follows members of the chorus break up the spears, shells, et cetera, owned by the deceased.

One of the painted dancers climbs a tree and hangs from a limb by his knees. The leader and chorus sit down in front of the totemic wells. They sing the sea-way cycle of songs (see pages 419-421). The cockatoo calls out in imitation of the sulphur-crested bird. He is supposed to be the mokoi spirit of a dead man.

A second dancer on the ground dances back and forth in front of the chorus of men and the leader. He is also painted white and is supposed to be the newly released ghost of the dead man who is still too timid to go out in the jungle and join the other ghosts. He tries to hide in the trees where the cockatoo is, but the bird sees him and screams out, just as the white cockatoos high in the trees do today

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765 535 when, as the natives suppose, they see the ghosts who hide in the jungles.

The cockatoo in the tree continues calling out, "Ni-erk! Ni-erk! Ni-erk!" while the men by the well reply with "Gar-ra! Gar-ra! Gar-ra!" They are the old ghosts of the people who are long since dead, and who are living in the bush and in the jungle.

Two dancers gather out in front of the chorus and dance, first the jungle, and then a small pigeon, lapar, which is looked upon as a ghost.

The bones of the dead man have been lying tied up in a paper-bark receptacle within the "totemic well" until the mokoi spirit gets up and dances with them. The cockatoo dancer who has been on the ground follows him about and pretends to be watching him very carefully. About a hundred and fifty feet away the women of the camp have gathered in a broken circle facing toward the totemic well. The leader at this moment leads the men to where the women's group is dancing with the monotonous rhythm which characterizes nearly all of the female dancing. The women, too, are supposed to be ghosts.

765 When the men reach the spot where the women are, the bones of the dead man are given to his female mari. She holds them for a moment and then gives them back to the leader but he once again returns them to her.

The taking of the bones the first time by the women is supposed to mean that they intend keeping both the bones and the spirit of the dead, they are not going to allow them to go away from their group. When the bones are given back it means that the spirit has already gone and they can't keep it. The bones are returned by the dancer to the female mari because they are only bones now and she is to keep them and the various female relatives are to carry them for the proper time.

The women wail when the bones are given to them.

When the mother is tired carrying them, she says to the leader of the clan, "I want these bones of my son to stop in that hollow log. I am not strong enough to carry them. I want them to be in that proper place for them so if I get sick and die they will be there." Sometimes the mother gives the bones to other near female relatives and they carry them and pass them on to others until finally they return to the mother, when she informs the leader they should be placed in the hollow log. From other information gathered, it seems that the leader

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and male relatives are largely instrumental in setting the time for taking the bones from the women and placing them in the log.

When it is decided that the bones are to be finally removed from the kin group the leader sends several men out into the bush to find a suitable tree. They go about tapping the various eucalyptus trees with their fingers until one has the right sound which indicates that the center of it has been almost completely eaten out by termites. The tree is cut down, the bark scraped off, the inside cleaned out thoroughly. It is then carried back to the edge of the camp and placed in a clump of bushes or behind a windbreak. Sometimes a house is made for it, much as if it were a totemic emblem. Forked sticks are set up in the house and the hollow log placed in them so that it will not be upon the ground. This treatment is exactly the same as that given the ranga trumpet in the Djungguan ceremony. Red ocher is now placed on the hollow log. The garma cycle of songs is sung when it is put in the forked sticks. Yiritja sing a cycle beginning with the cloud and going through to the spider element in the sequence, which takes them from back in the bush with the spring flood to the sea; the Dua sing the land-way cycle.

The log is next carved into the proper shape. The log of each moiety has a different name. The Dua call theirs dai-mer-i, and the Yiritja, char-lum-bu. Eyes are cut into the top of the hollow log which are "all the same as the time when we see in the ocean eyes that belong to that hollow log." The lower section of the hollow log is divided into three parts: the upper third is the area where the sea fish are placed, the middle portion is where salt and fresh water meet and both types of fish are found, and the lower part is the land way where fresh-water fish only are found. In the late afternoon the men dance, first salt water; then salt-water fish; the kingfish; the sea wind coming after the kingfish has jumped in the water; the hollow log that comes from another country; the coconut floating in with the tide from other countries, which means that they are getting near the land where the fresh waters meet; and the tide coming in fast. All the men have on white clay; the women, who are dancing at a little distance, red ocher.

High tide is then danced, followed by low tide. Next in the sequence is people walking along the sea rocks looking for fish. They put their hands underneath the stones to find the fish and try to break the stones off with their feet. The men sit down in a ring with the two leaders sitting at one side, and the women stop their dancing. The ring is the same as the rock pool. They then sing the tide returning

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and everyone calls out the high water has covered up the rock. The leader sings he has caught a fish on a line and is carrying it to shore to take home. The tempo increases and the chorus is supposed to wash itself in the rock well water. The next song in the sequence is the talk of gathering fire wood to get the fish ready for eating, followed by the eating of the fish and the sleepy feeling that comes from gorging oneself. The last dance is that a big sea takes this totem hollow log, and everyone sings that the water has carried the log away. The leader runs and is followed by the chorus. He calls out the power name of water, then the sacred names of the totem well. The sacred name of the hollow log is cried out, and the log planted in the ground in an upright position. All the women cry and wail for the dead man. Food is given by the women to the leader. It is placed near the hollow log coffin. The leader says, "This food is for the old old ancestors. Only we very old people can eat it. You middle-aged people and young men and boys cannot have any of it," which means that the fully initiated men are the only ones who can eat this totem food (marai-in, sacred, powerful; na-ta, food). The others get ordinary food which has no spiritual significance.

Before the bones are placed in the coffin they are broken up with a stone.[5] When the log rots away the bones are not burned but left to decay. If an *outsider* should burn a hollow log with bones in it he would either be killed or threatened with death.

[5] A man's or woman's bones are sent back to his clan's territory and preferably near the clan well. "We do this so that when that hollow tree and bones are burned when our people are burning grass when the dry season starts this tree and bones will be burned and they will go into the ground of their own country."

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CHAPTER XIII

INTERPRETATION OF MURNGIN DEATH RITUALS—AN INTEGRATION OF MURNGIN SOCIETY

ALL THE elements of the mortuary ritual are designed, first, to remove the profane part of the human being who has died and, second, to spiritualize his soul and make it like his totem. The first ceremony sung over the dead (see pages 413-414) demonstrates the intent of the whole ritual. The names of the totems are sung to enable the dying man to act like his totem and become like it, that is, to be completely spiritualized and to remove any of the profane part of his personality. The intent of the ceremony is further demonstrated by the direct native interpretation of the actions of the individual who is mortally wounded in a fight and who performs his totemic dance to direct his soul to his well. In addition, his grandfather or collateral dead kin are believed to come for him to aid him to his well and prevent evil spirits from getting him. The totemic emblem aids their identification of him and makes him "all the same as a totem," just as the carved wooden stick or a wad of bark becomes the totem when it has the emblem placed on it and is ritually sung over. The singing of the garma songs helps direct the soul to the water hole, for "we sing for that warro (soul)—he walks the way we sing." The grave is made symbolically into the sacred totemic well and the Macassar leaving ceremony tells the soul of the dead a last farewell. The grave post and mast are also symbols of this final goodbye. In the exhumation ceremony of some of the clans the body is symbolically speared because it is a whale (totem). The temporary bark receptacle is painted with the totemic emblems, and the coffin itself, which is the final repository of the bones, is a mythical creature associated with the totem. All this clearly shows that one of the primary motives of the ceremony is symbolically to translate the soul out of all profane and worldly contacts and place it finally in the sacred totemic water hole. Another fundamental motif in the mourning ritual is to remove all contact of the dead from the living. The dead person is powerful because he is now a

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182 soul and because he has died by magic; these two concepts enter pro-
764 foundly into Murngin thinking about their dead relative. As a soul he
115 can be properly handled by ritual and translated back to the world of
765 the dead, but as a victim of magic—and all the dead are such victims
—he is very dangerous (see the chapter on magic). There are, then, a whole series of purificatory rites which serve to sever the dead's relationship to the living. They are of two varieties: the first is symbolically to force the separation from the living, and the second to propitiate the soul and tell it to go quietly to its totem well and not hurt the living. The second variety tends to prolong the ceremony as if the living people were loath to give up the soul to the dead. The first takes concrete symbolic form in the fire ceremonies which chase the soul away, the spider web dance which catches the soul, the pelican or net dance which does the same, and the removal from the group of the scapegoat who has carried the bones. In the second the songs express the indignation of the dead ancestors toward the living because the recently dead was not given better treatment and because the bones were retained by the female relatives.

182 The last primary motif in the mourning rites is found in the various
765 symbolic rituals performed to reintegrate the society, close its ranks after the removal of one of its members, and once more assert its solidarity. Ceremonial food is gathered from the whole group and eaten in the sacred wells made over the deceased's grave and at various other times during the ceremonies. The entire group paints itself and participates in the communion. This general participation is also to prevent the magic which killed the dead from harming the living. The symbolic expression of group solidarity (if the writer's theory of magic is correct) prevents the harmful effects of magic from spreading.

182 The relatives of the dead cannot be in too great haste to dispose of
764 the body or remove the soul from contact with the living, but neither
761 can they keep the soul too long, ("don't be too angry with us,"—see page 417). In either case the ancestors would not like it and would be offended. The living relatives have an ambivalent attitude toward their dead relative. They feel the strong social bond they once had for him. There is a consequent desire to keep him a part of the living and with them, and there is at the same time a feeling of abhorrence and repugnance. The long mourning ritual expresses these contradictions of attitude.

182 The burial of the body for several months allows the emotions of
765

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the bereaved relatives to settle; the later digging up of the bones, the women's carrying them, and the final reburial give ample time for the emotions finally to adjust themselves to this major crisis.

An examination of the kinship structure alone, without any conception of the total social personality or social participation of the former member of the living group, shows that if a man's father-in-law, for example, is taken by death from the social group, part of the social structure of the bereaved man is removed—at least the content of that part of the structure is gone. This forces a considerable readjustment by the living son-in-law, not only to his dead kin but to the dead's other relatives who are also his own. It seems highly likely that the period of mourning corresponds fairly definitely to the period of readjustment of the social structure to this social loss. The best evidence of this is that a baby, particularly a newborn child which has little or no social personality and has not become a part of the social structure, frequently has no ceremony for its burial; the women dig a shallow hole, deposit the body in it, and cover it—and it is quickly forgotten.

The social personality of a woman is less developed than that of a man (she does not participate, for example, in large parts of the ritual or directly in any of the spiritual behavior of the group, et cetera). The ceremonies for her are much less elaborate than those for a man. The ordinary man has less made of his burial than a man renowned for his feats of war, unless he has been killed by a blood feud. The death of an ordinary man by the blood feud organizes the major antagonisms and creates strong solidarities in the surviving group of kinsmen and those of the killer. The man who has participated the most in his social structure—a man, for example, who has been a great fighter, a ceremonial leader of his clan, and powerful in his kinship relations—is the person who has the strongest social bonds and who is mourned for the longest. A very old man is given less time in his mourning ritual than a man in the prime of life because his lateral and ascending kinship bonds are less strong—that is, the relatives who provide these bonds have previously died.

The Murngin Soul in Life and in Death.—Each Murngin man and woman has two souls. One is looked upon as fundamental and real, and is felt to be the true soul, the soul from the heart, while the other is considered a trickster, of little value, and only in a vague way associated with the "true man." The first is the birimbir or warro, and the second is the mokoi or shadow soul. The warro is the totemic well

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301 237 *Fish-vertebrae Necklace.*—The vertebrae of the larger fish, including sharks, are cleaned, bored, covered with red ocher, and strung on a strand of fiber string which is tied tightly around the neck. These necklaces are worn by all members of the tribe on any occasion.

291 *Human-hair Belts.*—The Murngin wear a belt or band made of human hair which fits tightly across the upper portion of the buttocks and around the sides as far as the hip bones, where strings are attached and tied in front of the pubic hair. There are two types, a bundle or cylindrical one, and a flat or sewn variety. One continuous human hair string about fifty to sixty feet long is looped back and forth and the end of the bunch of loops wrapped for one-half inch with fiber string or human hair. The belt has a norm of about twenty-two inches, which varies from twelve to twenty-four inches. It has about fifty-five strands in it, but varies from twenty-four to sixty-five. Frequently the opossum pubic covering is attached to this belt, although usually it is worn by itself. A single small loop may be left at each end to which the fiber string for tying is attached.

The flat type of belt is made with one continuous string looped about thirty times. Vegetable fiber or human hair string is tied about each end of the bundle, which is flattened by stitching with bands of fiber string at about three-inch intervals. This allows the belt to fit snugly against the buttocks of the wearer and across the small of the back.

292 Ceremonial human hair belts are made by wrapping red parrot feathers over each of the strands in the belt to form a solid layer of red. The wrapping material is pandanus leaf. These belts are always made from the hair of dead persons, which limits the size of the belt. The strands varied, in the few examined, from six to twelve in number. This belt is only worn on ceremonial occasions and no woman may see it, even though it is made from the hair of either men or women.

[765] [784]

291 301 *Pubic Aprons.*—The pubic apron, usually of opossum fur string, is less an item of clothing than an article of adornment. Although it is an expression of the people's modesty, it is classed with necklaces and bracelets rather than as a covering for the genitalia. It is composed of a basal strand and a fringe. The basal strand is usually of fiber string, but occasionally human hair is used. The fringe is made of one continuous strand of opossum fur looped about the basal cord. Each loop is twisted into a two-ply tassel, which is about ten inches long for men and five to six inches for women. The ends of the basal strand are tied in a large knot to keep the loops from slipping off. The apron is attached to a belt.

285 *Baskets.*—Since all baskets are carrying baskets equipped with carrying-strings, they also have been placed in the category of things worn.

All basketry in this district is made by the twining technique. The inner layer of the pandanus leaf and water-lily fiber are the two materials used. The latter is found only in the open-work type of basket, while the former is generally used for the tightly woven mesh, and occasionally also for the

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white birds' down is stuck on it. A red snake is painted with human blood from the bottom to the top of the emblem. On the top of the Yernerlindi is put a native companion feather headdress to symboliże the snake's head. The whole of the object is supposed to be the great totem snake. It is used only in the Gunabibi ceremony.

The Yernerlindi measures sixteen feet by one foot by seven and one-half inches.

Hollow Cylindrical Objects.—All such objects are made from trees whose centers have been eaten out by termites until only a hollow shell remains. The size of the tree used depends on the purposes for which the object is required.

The native walks through a eucalyptus grove thumping trees until he finds one whose sound indicates that it is hollow. The tree is ringed a few feet from the ground. When the tree falls the trunk is cut the proper length. A pole is then cut and used as a ramrod to clean the termite nest out of the interior.

The outer and inner bark are next cleaned off with an axe and any remaining pieces of bark scraped from the surface with the axe edge.

These hollow cylinders divide into three types: (1) ir-a-ki (wooden trumpet); (2) u-var (ceremonial drum); and (3) dai-mer-i ("coffin").

Iraki: There are three varieties of this object. The first is the ordinary long trumpet, which is about four feet long with a diameter of two and one-half inches. The smaller end of the log is made into a mouthpiece by whittling slightly.

A second type is much larger (six to eight feet long; six inches in diameter). It is used exclusively as a ceremonial object in the Djungguan ceremony. It represents Bapa Indi (father great), the Great Snake. Beeswax is put at the small end to form a mouthpiece.

The third type, which is seldom seen, is about two feet long and two and one-half inches in diameter. A hole is bored through the wall into the inner tube. The blower, instead of putting his lips at one end of the trumpet, places his mouth over the hole and blows. The sound is low and unformed.

Uvar: This drum is only a hollow log with no modification except painting. It ranges from four to six feet in length and is from seven to eight inches in diameter. It is beaten with a drum stick of pandanus leaves wrapped with the same material. The uvar is carried under the arm of a dancer in the Ulmark ceremony and is used at no other time. The sound made by the beating is the voice of the snake.

Daimeri: This coffin may be either a simple hollow cylinder or it may have two barbed prongs at the top. The length varies from six to fifteen feet, and the prongs from one and one-half to two feet. The diameter is about nine inches. Two holes directly opposite each other represent eyes of a mythical creature.

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765 [532] A foot below the "eyes" a band a half-inch wide is incised around the cylinder to represent the cicatrice on a native man's or woman's body.

The bones of the dead after exhumation are placed inside the coffin, a hole is dug a foot or so in the ground, and the log placed upright in the hole.

764 [533] *Grave Posts.*—A tree is felled and a log of the appropriate length cut from it. The post may be uncarved or a series of incisions may be made at the top of it to give it the appearance of a carved "head" with one or more necks.

The grave posts are placed over the grave of the dead, or they may be erected in the camp of a mourner to express his feeling of sorrow for the loss of his relation.

Measurements:

Length: adult, four to five feet; child, three and one-half feet.

Diameter: three to six inches.

765 [531] *Bark Coffin.*—The inner bark of a stringy-bark tree is soaked with water and heated over a fire, then formed into a cylinder with the inside of the bark turned out. It is stuffed with grass to keep it in shape and prevent it from splitting. The bones are placed in it and its two edges sewn together with pandanus fiber and a bone awl. The whole surface is covered with red ocher and painted with the totemic design of the deceased. The coffin is two feet long and four or five inches in diameter.

778 *Plank Ranga.*—Floating planks brought in on the tide, possibly from New Guinea, are of special totemic significance, and some of them are made into rangas by painting a design on them. The boards of a modern European box are now sometimes used in the same manner.

292 287 *Bark Belts.*—A strip of stringy bark about two inches in width, with a circumference great enough to reach about the body of a man, is soaked in water and held over a fire to make it pliable and to smooth its surface. It is then bent into its permanent shape and tied around the wearer. The ends are tied with fiber string and the belt is held in place by knotting the strings across the abdomen of the wearer. The belts are painted and used in ceremonies.

765 [531] *Mourning Mast.*—The mast is supposed to represent the one used by the Malay in their sailing vessels when they visited southern Arafura waters.

The mast is made from a long eucalyptus sapling and is about fourteen and a half feet high and three inches in diameter. The tree is barked first and then cut to leave a protruding oblong band around the circumference a third of the way from the top. The band is decorated with the totemic designs of the deceased. Fiber strings are tied to the top of the post and represent mast ropes.

796 *Barnumbir Stick.*—A stick about the length of a spear is cut with a diameter of three-quarters of an inch and is sharpened at one end. It is

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(18) Mortuary platform (gur-o gur-o ["house of the spirit"]). 764
(19) Blue-tongued lizard (dja-bak-a-lak). 533
"He is sung because he goes into the ranga well water."
(20) Finch (djir-kai).
(21) Mirrirmina totem well.
"This is because the spirit of the dead man has now gone inside his totem well."

When a man is considered dead, his relatives start digging a grave for him or preparing a platform for his body some distance from the main camp. While this is being done the sequence of songs is repeated.

The body is allowed to remain a few months in the grave or on the platform until the flesh is decomposed to a jelly-like substance. The flesh is then taken off the bones. While this is being done a new sequence of songs is sung: 765 533

(1) Fresh water pouring from a spring.
(2) Small fresh-water fish.
(3) Sea eagle which catches the fish (dimala).
(4) Pelican.
The pelican is sung because he has a bill which is like a net and catches the fish. "The fish are all the same as the soul of that dead man" (see accounts of the makarata). [825]
(5) A big plain.
"This is all the same as that water which came out of the spring which has come down from the hill country and the bush to the flat sea plain."
(6) Small sea bird which announces the water is near the sea.
(7) Fire to burn off the grass for the dry season.
(8) The darpa snake.
(9) Rain (waltjurn).
(10) Coucal gurundula.
This is a symbol of the wet season.
(11) Crow (wak).
The crow is a symbol of the beginning of the dry season and also of a ghost, "because he tries to pick up the bones of the dead man and he will eat anything." "This means that the people are getting ready to pick up the bones and the body smells." [825]
(12) Small fish.
This is the same song as that sung in the first part of this sequence; at this point paper bark is made ready for taking the bones out of the grave or from the platform. A Yurlunggur

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765 533 trumpet is brought out and accompanies the singing sticks in the songs.

(13) Yurlunggur.

All the songs before this were the garma variety and could be sung in the general camp. Now the leader takes up the Djungguan song itself. Yurlunggur is blown over the bones just as over the initiates in the Djungguan ceremony. "Yurlunggur is trying to take the dead man's spirit to the totem well. 'You can come to me now,' he says."

765 While Yurlunggur has been trumpeting, the dué and galle (male) have tied up the bones in a paper-bark bundle. They take the bones and leave them back in the bush. They make a camp for themselves a short distance from the main camp and construct a special bush house in which to place the bones. Later—there is no specified interval of time—these relatives bring the bones back to the edge of the camp. Yurlunggur is supposed to come with them, which means that the totemic trumpet is brought out. The leader pours water on the two men (dué and galle), then covers them with red ocher. While this occurs, a new sequence of songs is sung:

765 533
(1) Basket (that which is used for the bones).
(2) Tree (wood used for rangas).
(3) Mangrove where the catfish makes his spears.
(4) Catfish (bartna).
(5) Small fish again.
(6) Fresh water for washing.
(7) River water.
(8) The log trap placed in rivers for catching fish.

It is at this point that the men are painted with red ocher.

765 During the period in which the bones are left in the bush the women are told that the snake has swallowed them and taken them away with him. They are not told that the bones are in the hands of the men until the bones are turned over to the women to be carried by them until final disposal.

[783] The bath and red ocher for the men who have cleaned the bones and kept them in the bush are not only to take away the stench from the men, but also to remove their ceremonial uncleanliness. The parents of the dead [431] always ask these relatives to perform the service of cleaning and keeping the bones, and in return for this service they give presents. The presents usually are the best, which means that the ranga is given. It will be noticed that the two, dué and galle, belong to one moiety and the dead man and his parents to the other; the exchange of services is across the moiety line.

765 775 The stench of the body which is upon the dué and galle is not different from the sweat of a living man and just the same as the spirit itself. If

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765 775

the men continued to smell this way it would be as though they had swallowed the spirit of the dead man.

765 533

When the bones are returned to the main camp the sequence of garma sung during the first part of the ceremony, when it is thought the sick man is about to die, beginning with the stringy-bark flowers and ending with the Mirrirmina well, is repeated. This is sung while the bones are taken out of the paper-bark basket and put in another one. Red ocher is put on the bones at this time, which "is the same as putting the spirit back in the well again." When the bones are being wrapped in the paper bark the small fish are once more sung. The bones are then left on the outside of the camp and the men go on to the men's ground and paint themselves. They are supposed to be rock pythons. They then come outside to the main camp and dance the following sequence:

765 535

(1) Rain, which is the snake's spittle.
(2) Coucal gurundula.
(3) A meteor falling (djam-bu-la).
This is the sign of a man dying and is looked upon as the departure of his spirit.
(4) Whirlwind (wa-kar), which is also a spirit.
(5) A particular kind of rain which means that the wet season has commenced.
(6) Coucal (again).
(7) Stringy-bark flower and tree.
(8) Honeybee flying.
(9) The stench of the dead man is to be put away in a hollow log coffin.
(10) The phalanger.
(11) They continue by dancing the stringy-bark-flower to Mirrirmina-well sequences of songs.

When the warala warala song is sung, two dancers bring out the marai yirri. This is like the spirit of the yam which ran into the sacred water hole and also like the spirit of the dead man. The two men are painted with patterns which represent the "string harness" of women. They are supposed to be women and also warala waralas. They carry the dead man's bones. The chorus of all the men stands on one side in a group and the two men facing them dance up and down before them. The men dance pretending they are going to take the bones away. The chorus pretends that it is trying to pull them back. They dance from the center of the camp to the edge of the bush while the leader calls out the sacred names of the totemic well. The chorus is supposed to win the contest, and the bones are then given to the mother or wife of the dead man. The women beat their heads and cry, frequently cutting themselves with stone knives.

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765 The bones are circulated from the mother or wife to the other near female relatives of the dead man. Finally, after several months or possibly a year, the bones are given back to the brother or father of the deceased. They then may be put on the platform or placed in a hollow log coffin. If they are put on a platform several months elapse before they are taken down and finally placed in a hollow log.

When the bones are to be placed in the hollow log the women are ordered to gather a great quantity of bush food, preferably cycad nuts. The leader sends men out into the bush to select a tree hollowed out by termites. The bones are collected from the women and placed in a bush house at the edge of the camp beside the hollow log coffin. A marai yirri [202] is then made which is used as a message stick and sent to the other encampments of related clans to invite them to come to the final ceremony.

The men clean the bark off the log and carve it while the women prepare the dancing ground. This ground is of no particular shape. The coffin is painted with red ocher and the bones are once more given a coating of the same material. The symbol of the totem well is also painted on the bones. The leader then asks the women for the large palm-nut cake which they have prepared and takes it to the bush house. The women are not allowed to come. The garma cycle of songs, beginning with stringy-bark flower [533] and ending with the Mirrirmina well, is once more sung. When the men arrive at the white stone song the keeper of the bones picks them up. They then sing the lightning coming from the sky and hitting the tree. The bones are broken into small pieces and put into a paper-bark receptacle. The legs and arms are broken first, then the jaw bone. The skull is not broken to pieces at this time because the mother or some other near female relative [302] is supposed to keep it. All the men paint themselves with a snake pattern. The bones are then taken in a basket to the main camp and given to the women, who cry over them. They are told to look at them for the last time. They hit their heads and once more cut themselves to show their sorrow. The bones are then returned to the men's dance ground, where snake's spittle (rain), the rock python, and the totem well are sung again.

The bones are then dropped in the hollow log. The log is stuffed at both ends with bark to keep the bones from falling out and placed in the fork of a tree. A hole is then dug and the hollow-log coffin placed upright in the ground. This completes the final ceremony over the bones of the dead man among the western clans of the Dua moiety.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Oll7 Murngin Ol17

The skull,[21] which also has been painted with its totemic design, is placed in a string carrying-bag. Both the skull and the bark coffin containing the bones are carried from one camp to another by a near female relative of the dead man and suitably mourned over, so that the dead spirit will be happy. At night the bark coffin is placed on a pair of forked sticks, and the skull, in its carrying-bag, hung on a nearby tree.

(iii) *The Final Burial*

At the end of some months, after the old men have decided that the time is ripe for the final disposal of the bones, the brothers of the dead man cut down a hollow tree to make a log coffin and, after taking off the bark, paint on it the totemic design of the dead man.[22]

While the bones are being transferred from the bark to the log coffin the men perform the water dance. A tribal sister then digs a hole in the ground, the log coffin is placed in the hole in an upright position,[23] the earth packed tightly round the base, and the burial rituals are over. Sometimes the small bones of the hands and feet are given to near relatives as mementoes. The skull, being too large to go in the log coffin, is usually broken up and thrown away.

Four bark paintings illustrate the burial rituals: Pl. 100A, the ceremonies at death; Pl. 99D, the cleansing of the bones and the placing in the bark coffin; Pl. 100B, the transference of the bones to the log coffin; and Pl. 101D, a complete sequence of burial.

On Pl. 100A, panel *a*, a newly deceased man is surrounded by mourning women. On panel *b*, the dead man is in his grave (this is an earth burial). On the lower edge of the painting three men are beating their music sticks together and singing, accompanied by a fourth, blowing his drone tube.[24] Above the grave are four dancing women and, on panel *c*, another line of women singing and dancing. The remainder of the painting deals with the journey of the spirit to Nalkuna, the *jiritja* heaven. This will be described later, p. 529.

Plate 99D pictures a ceremony associated with the second phase of the burial ceremonies of a *dua* man, the cleansing of the bones.

In the centre of the painting is the desiccated body resting on the burial platform (short lines on either side). At *a* his mother, *b* his sister, *c* his wife, are stabbing themselves in the scalp with a bone specially sharpened for the occasion. The blood flowing from each woman is indicated by the adjacent cross-hatching. At *d* and *f*, two *dua* men are beating their music sticks and chanting the burial songs, and at *e* a *jiritja* man is blowing the drone tube.

21. See painted skull, Pl. 101C, E.
22. This design is the same as that painted on the body of the dead man throughout his life.
23. See Milingimbi log coffin, Pl. 105A. Those used at Yirrkalla were longer, simpler and without projecting spikes on top.
24. This is a hollow stick, or sometimes a length of bamboo, about two inches in diameter and up to five feet in length, which is blown like a trumpet. Some investigators call them by the European name of didjeridoo.

753 fire, and, as the smoke ascended, he asked it to carry this coughing
754 sickness to these people.

754 In this aboriginal community are men known as Gulung, or
756 "Marrngit," who exercise magic in a curative or preventive way. Their chief function is to discover and combat the sinister purposes of the Ragalk, or of evil spirits. Neither the Ragalk nor the Marrngit occupy a position apart from the ordinary life of the people, nor do they exercise any special functions in the ceremonial life of the tribe.

628 Magic is also believed to operate through an article known
● 765 as "Maiyabala." When a man dies or is killed, a scrap of one of
778 his bones, or a piece of one of his weapons or utensils, is given by one of his near relatives to each of his friends. This article is known as a "Maiyabala," and carries with it this important significance. Every man accepting the "Maiyabala" places himself under the obligation of doing his best to avenge the death of the deceased. I have known men who have allowed themselves to be persuaded into accepting the "Maiyabala," to be later deeply troubled when they have considered the probable consequences of their action. There is no way of escaping the obligation, and these men have thus made themselves party to a serious quarrel which probably does not concern them.

[672] When a man, in fulfilment of this obligation, kills another, he
765 is usually relieved from personal responsibility in the matter, the
778 magical property of the "Maiyabala," by directing the man's spear and giving strength to his throw, being regarded as the actual cause of the killing. The Maiyabala is also worn as a charm, and is believed to assist the wearer in fighting or in the pursuit of game, the idea being that the spirit of the dead man reinforces and assists that of the wearer of this relic.

775 Closely allied to the above are some of the beliefs concerning the "Mali," or lesser spirits, of men who have been killed. When a man has killed another it is believed that the "Mali" of the slain seeks to enter the person of the slayer, the idea here being that, by overcoming the man's body, the victor has also overcome his spirit, which now seeks to serve its new master. Numbers of men of my acquaintance claim to have passed through this experience.

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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Burial and Mourning

Upon the death of a person, especially one of honour and influence, violent expressions of grief are indulged in. The men stand in groups, with spears reversed, with tears streaming down their faces, with the whole body relaxed into a drooping posture, and mournfully chant the death song of their tribe. Meanwhile, the women keep up a dreadful wailing, cut their heads with flints, shells, or sticks until the blood pours down their naked bodies, and throw themselves upon the ground in an utter abandonment of grief. These performances are repeated several times over, especially if fresh parties arrive at the camping ground. 152 763

Before the body is disposed of, there is painted upon it the totemic design of the horde to which the deceased belonged, and to the spirit or totemic centre of which the soul of the departed is believed to return. The body is disposed of either by interment in the ground or by being placed upon a platform constructed for the purpose. 764

In either case, after the body has decomposed, the bones are recovered by male relatives and painted with red ochre. A ceremony is then held, during which the bones are handed over to the female relatives of the deceased, and by them are carried about, sometimes for several years. For this purpose a cylinder of bark is constructed, which is also painted with the person's totemic symbols. Finally, another elaborate ceremony is held, when the bones are broken and deposited in a tall hollow post, which is planted upright in the ground at any convenient place. 765

While the body is awaiting burial, certain near male relatives of the deceased make in the ground a representation of the particular totemic centre, and there ceremonially partake of food, which is known as "Wukandi." None of this food must be given to outsiders, nor must these men partake of food elsewhere. In this way they enter into communion with their departed brother, who is believed to be present with them in these ceremonial meals. 764

Shortly after the disposal of the body, the near relatives of the deceased pass through a purification ceremony, known as "Wontjurr," during which they are washed in a representation of the pool which constitutes the totemic or spirit centre of their 764 783

431 Payments or gifts such as those made by a young man under these conditions are known as *tadoit*, (*ta*, mouth, *doit*, signifying return, turn around, turn back), and they occur on many occasions apart from initiation, in each of which, however, the obligations are similar.

765 784 Mourning and funeral rites among these people are extremely prolonged and are surrounded by many tabus and intricate patterns of obligatory conduct. The group which handles the bones of the dead, which may be carried for some years after they are removed from the ground soon after the initial burial, are called *koŋ wukundi*, lit. "hands tabu", and these people are placed temporarily outside the normal social life of their hordes. Members of such groups, which stand in a special relation to society, [182] remain in the camp, but they live apart, and this is stressed [252] by the fact that they maintain separate fires at which they cook their own food, apart. But the tabu is not absolute and others within the camp will occasionally take something, such as a firebrand to start another fire, from this [431] *wukundi* (tabu) place. If this should occur the people who take the fire will send back a small present of food in return. This again is called *tadoit* (*vide infra*). If they should omit to make this present they are in danger, after having eaten food cooked at the *wukundi* fire, because they have shared in the solidarity of a group, members of which are linked by the bond of their special relationship with the deceased and so are set apart temporarily from the normal social life of the horde.

431 765 182 The bones of the dead are handled at intervals during the prolonged mortuary rites, and each time this occurs, the small group on whom falls the obligation of doing it, makes presentations called *koŋ doit* and *ta doit*. The

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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and everything connected with it, including fish, turtle, and other food carried in it, were tabu to women and children. It appeared that two days previously the horde had migrated from the south and had brought a skeleton in the canoe, thereby rendering it tabu to women and children. It was another case of mumbakuta.

Sons and sons-in-law of the deceased person brought the fish ashore and ate them around a totemic well scooped in the sand. The leavings were carefully buried in the 'well' and the customary fire lit over them. The camp then went to the canoe on the beach, lit a fire on the sand, and taking leafy branches held them in the smoke and switched them over the canoe to hunt off the ghost of the dead man. Once the skeleton's influence on the canoe was removed, it was safe to travel in, and food could be eaten from it.

Skeletons are customarily carried in bark parcels and exert far-reaching influences, and 'mali', or ghosts, accompanying such bones must be placated. In an exchange I made with Yama for his father's bones (which I wanted to send to the Sydney Museum), I bartered several items for the complete skeleton in its bark cylinder with his horde's totemic symbols painted on the outside. Unknown to me, there were two powerful influences in the bark parcel, one in the bones and the other in the totemic symbols on the bark itself; for such bones laid a tabu on all they touched, just as they would have done if carried in a canoe, and the bark cylinder, by having a totemic sign painted on it, was sacred. Among the items I had exchanged for the skeleton was an axe, so it was agreed that for ceremonial purposes, this should absorb the tabu from the bones and also from the bark cylinder. Thereafter only the nearest relatives could touch it. To remove the skeleton tabu from the axe, Yama cut open a tree containing a bee's nest. Because of the tabu, only fully initiated men of the horde could eat it; but after the meal, the axe was painted to make it

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safe for everyone to use. But the influence of the totem on the cylinder still remained in the axe, and it could therefore be used only by near relatives. To overcome this, Yama cut a canoe, thereby transferring the totemic influences to it. The dug-out was 'de-ghosted' in much the same way as if it had carried the actual bones; fish caught from it were ceremonially eaten, and it was switched with smoking twigs to drive off the tabu.

'Ghostly' help is freely sought by hunters to assist them in their search for food. It is generally accepted that if the ghost, or mali, of a dead man is harnessed it will assist in the hunt by rounding up fish, birds, or animals. A ghost dims the eyes of the game so they cannot see clearly, blocks their ears so they cannot hear the hunter, and plays such havoc with their noses that he is unrecognizable.

To obtain the assistance of such a ghost, a hunter must carry a 'maiwola' or small piece of bone, hair, skin, or blood from the corpse. Small bones, hair, or other parts of a body, may be had for the asking when a corpse is being dismembered in any normal burial ceremony, and these 'hunting-charms' are wrapped in bark and hung round the neck. The ghost, or mali, lurks near its skeleton and, as in the instance of a skeleton carried in a canoe, exerts influence over it and all that it touches. But when a hunter carries a piece of the body as a charm, he is able to control the ghost so that it does his bidding, and when he is hunting the ghost follows the charm. If it happens that several men have obtained charms from the same corpse, and in different parts of the country go hunting at the same time, the ghost will serve one and then hurry off to help another. This explains why charms are not always effective, for if a hunter catches nothing, that is because the ghost is otherwise engaged, or is away lurking by the main part of its skeleton, which is wrapped in bark and carried by a tribal mother.

Any strange event can be readily explained by attributing

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into flame long after a bush-fire has passed, are in all seriousness attributed to mischievous spirits. All fires thus have some meaning, and though their significance may be wrongly interpreted, they do play an important part in elementary signalling. 202 372 [775]

A family brought the news to Yirrkala that a woman and her child were dangerously ill near Port Bradshaw, and as Mataman was going that way a few days later, he promised to let the local people know about the patients by smoke-fires. If they were dead he was to light a smoke-fire, and if they had recovered he was to do nothing. When great clouds of smoke billowed over the hills the following day, it was assumed that the woman was dead, and the usual wailing and mourning songs were sung. However, a few days later the woman and her child walked into Yirrkala and explained that Mataman had been hunting kangaroos and had lit a fire to smoke them out. [765]

Friendly visitors invariably light fires to give warning of their approach; otherwise they might be mistaken for enemies, and speared. In any case they do not know where their hosts are hunting, and they light fires to invite an answer from the camp they intend visiting. Smoke is also sent up as a warning signal when anything untoward happens, and a passing lugger is enough to start a line of fires. As each party of hunters sees the boat, they light fires to warn their friends. [574]

The rapidity with which detailed messages are passed from one camp to another has led to the assumption that information has been sent by secret smoke-signals. But the message-carriers are human. I have known men and women to travel long distances by night and, by taking short cuts, to be on the beach the following morning to meet the lugger after we had sailed some sixty miles overnight. [203]

A government officer was due to arrive at the station by air, and as the Yulengor had not previously seen an aeroplane

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bodies. This glue is obtained by cutting a vein in the arm, painting the blood on the skin and adding feathers before it congeals. Paint brushes are made from human hair or from twigs.

I remember watching Wonggu mix his colours in shells, flatten his bark, and prepare his orchid gum. Only then did he realize that he needed a brush, so he leaned over and cut a tuft of hair from his son's head, bound it to a twig and commenced his mural.

A well-known anthropologist stayed with us at Yirrkala and obtained a big selection of aboriginal arts and crafts and bark paintings. He paid the Yulengor well, and they gave full play to their ingenuity, manufacturing such things as bows and arrows which, incidentally, are not used by aborigines. I saw several paintings in the collection in the usual red, yellow, white, and black, together with an additional vivid blue. Not having seen blue before, I could not account for it till later in the day my wife chanced to remark that several of her blue-bags had disappeared.

Body decorations are made by mutilating the skin, and one pleasing mutilation resembles a string of beads on a woman's breast, where each bead is a raised nodule of flesh about the size of a pea. Women and girls scar a pattern on the skin with firesticks, and rub pipeclay into the wound; a more common practice is to cut the marks into the flesh before filling them with clay. For reasons of vanity and custom, a woman has a few cicatrices across her hips, and possibly on her shoulders, and in the event of sorrow she adds some to her midriff. If a brother should die, a sister paints horizontal lines across the backs of her legs below the knees, and when his bones are being collected she substitutes gashes for her clay markings.

It was explained that a man gets a friend to cut the customary perpendicular lines from his shoulder and halfway to his elbow, but he himself makes the more important

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one end with bark. A hole is made in the side of the tube for a piece of curved tin or a thimble to hold the tobacco. Birds, animals, or men are sometimes carved or painted on the stem. As a special favour a man will promise a pipe to a friend when it is worn out, and after months of constant use, when the pipe is saturated with nicotine, the presentation is made. The recipient proceeds to crush the frail tube and scrape its interior for the handful of nicotine shavings; other men gather, a pipe is filled with the moist shavings, and with a coal on top it is passed from one to another. It is customary to draw only once or twice, and everyone fills his lungs with smoke, holds it as long as possible and reluctantly exhales. The mixture is so strong that a whiff of it will cause coughing and the eyes to water.

Clap-sticks and drone-pipes, or 'didjery-doos', are the only musical instruments known to Stone Age men. Drone-pipes are hollow tree-trunks, about four feet long and three inches in diameter, which have been eaten out by white ants. Men blow through them, and the low drumming sound can be heard from camps at night as the people join in the camp-songs. Clap-sticks, or short pieces of hardwood, are beaten together, and make a noise sometimes like the rat-a-tat of a kettle-drum. Nomads are musically inclined; they will sing from dusk till midnight for pleasure, and also in times of sorrow. Myths are transmitted and thoughts are expressed in song. Apart from songs with refrains, well-known theme-songs relate to Yulengor themselves, to camp-sites, sharks, the sea, rain, and canoes loaded with fish.

A 'camp-site' song has words and phrases fitted into the timing according to the fancy of the leader, and is interspersed by humming or the repetition of euphonious phrases. A song might go something like this:

'Coming to a camp' . . . 'men recline and await the women' 'Yanja, Wilama, Wirrwa', etc. (favoured camp-site names)

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remains of national heroes are enshrined in notable monuments, a lock of hair is treasured, and thousands of square miles have been given over to fields of grave-stones. But the Arnhem Land nomad preserves a memento of his dead by carrying the skeleton in a bark parcel. It is a pitiful gesture of affection, but the custom is not without ingenuity, for having no settled camp the nomad carries all his possessions with him. The bones of the largest skeletons are neatly wrapped in bark; they weigh only a few pounds, need no treatment, and are practically indestructible. In large camps it is an everyday occurrence for some mother to bring out the bones of a child and wail over them in company with other female relatives.

Stone Age temperament is established in childhood. Nomads unwittingly foster the nervous and emotional characteristics in their children, who are spoiled and pampered even to the age of ten. Every whim is met, and mothers go to endless discomfort to fulfil their children's dictatorial demands. A woman returns to camp after a hard day's foraging; she is loaded with firewood, water, and food, and she also carries a child of four or five years of age until she is within a hundred yards or so of camp, when she exhaustedly puts him down to walk beside her. But instead of following her he throws himself on the ground, kicking and screaming tearlessly, till the mother's resolve is broken and she returns to bring him in. A favourite habit in soothing whimpering infants is to caress and pet their genital organs till fitful slumber claims them.

Primitive emotion is thinly veiled. Thoughts, desires, and feelings that are suppressed or camouflaged in civilized society are in aboriginal life given free play; they lie open for inspection and are accepted as natural phenomena. This unrestrained emotion does much to account for the frequent and unexpected changes in the Stone Age man's attitude, and for his alleged treachery.

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152 628 spearing any wandering nomad they may have chanced upon.

578 Camp quarrels are fiery and frequent, and everyone joins in on the slightest provocation. An imaginary slight, perhaps a small irregularity in food distribution, or the frequently [589] organized female attempts to annoy a bachelor by accusing him of making advances to married women, are enough to arouse resentment and inflame the emotions. Physical violence is usually preceded by a noisy battle of wit and the 578 exchange of abuse. Over forty commonly used abusive 195 epithets range from ingenious and witty references to male and female genital abnormalities to the calling into question of the integrity of parents, as well as that of future generations. It is also common to threaten to leave a man's bones to rot in the grave instead of removing them for decent [765] burial in a burying post; the formal curse is: 'May your bones rot before they can be lifted for interment.'

Every possible, impossible, and imaginary physical irregularity, ranging from the ludicrous to the obscene, is applied to the genital organs of both sexes, and all the references are shouted in the open camp. A favourite obscene remark is that an opponent's eyes, ears, and mouth are filled with placenta; a short abusive term accuses a woman of harlotry and describes fantastic intimacies on her part, whilst a man can have similar cryptic charges hurled at him.

Milder references are made to big eyes, knees, elbows, and sunken eyes; bones are said to be solid and lifeless like stone, and eyes and ears are described as blunt. Minor scornful phrases used by mothers to children include the impatient exclamation: 'Your fingers are thumbs'; arms and legs are said to be awkwardly long, the neck to be short, the head to be sitting on the shoulders.

578 Despite his emotional temperament, Stone Age man has artificial methods of arousing a display of temper. If he feels that he has been slighted and wishes to vent his grievances,

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have killed him.' At other times the marrngeit is called to examine the body and reconstruct the crime, for by his supernatural powers he can see the marks of the alleged wound, and by sleight of hand he pulls it open to prove his case. He can see the ghost of the killer lurking near the victim's body, or if the body has been disposed of he can still name the killer by an examination of the victim's armlet, spear, or footprints. 754 761 787

Birrinjauwoi of Milingimbi died from pleurisy and was buried before a marrngeit could be brought to examine him. His ornaments and personal possessions were therefore put aside for the autopsy, but when a trickle of moisture came from the lips of the corpse it was hailed as the best specimen of all and was taken to the marrngeit. This marrngeit was a wise man and talked to them and asked questions till he felt sure of their feelings, and then dramatically named the 'killer'.

A youth was killed somewhere in the hills behind Blue Mud Bay, and within three days we heard of it from messengers who ran with the news to us at Yirrkala. They called on the relatives to organize a revenge party, and personal possessions from the corpse were shown and small parts of his flesh distributed. In the emotion which flamed through the country, wailing women incited their men to vengeance. I was reminded of the biblical story of an ancient Hebrew tribe which received parts of a body that had been carved up and sent amongst them to cry for vengeance, and they swept over the hills of Palestine to exterminate a related horde. 628 765

Relics from a dead man are known as 'maiyabala', and consist of finger joints, small bones, fragments of the spear embedded in the body, dried blood, skin, flesh, hair, or ornaments. They are given to relatives as reminders of their obligation to exact blood vengeance and by the very acceptance of them the pact is sealed. A victim's lesser spirit 774 789 765

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774 accompanies the maiyabala to assist in locating and
789 killing the murderer. Maiyabala are often carried in the
765 mouth, in totemic dilly-bags, or rolled in bees wax and tied round the neck. They give extra strength and skill to the wearers and guide them to the enemy, who, in turn, is made unwary and tired.

765 Raiwola told me that he had accepted such a maiyabala
628 but for years his vow remained unfulfilled. Then one day after a long kangaroo hunt in the rain he stood warming himself by a fire with several other men, amongst whom chanced to be the killer of his relative. Without a word Raiwola plunged his spear into him, and in reply to the astounded questions of the huntsmen, he produced his maiyabala as proof that it had been done in settlement of the old debt.

726 It is rarely left to one man to avenge a death, for in the
628 heat of emotion that follows a killing the relatives go in a body to exact vengeance. Killing-parties are known as
[301] 'merringor', and their appropriate sign in the sign-language is wiping the open palm down over the face to suggest their ruthlessness in wiping out men, women, and children. In feverish passion, and with maiyabala and totemic dilly-bags slung from their necks, merringor lose all fear and travel relentlessly till they are lean and exhausted. They daub their
[302] bodies with white clay, a practice which plainly indicates their intentions, they creep silently on their enemies, and with wild yells they hurl their spears into the sleeping groups. Such raids are seldom bloodless, and more deaths result from these attacks than from all other forms of violence.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Burial Rites and Cannibalism

DEATH and burial customs are much the same from one end of Arnhem Land to the other. Bodies are artistically painted and decorated before they are buried or exposed on platforms or in trees. Later the bones are collected and hoarded by relatives till they feel disposed to deposit them in decorated burial posts. In one district bones are removed from the body and parts of the flesh are eaten in an effort to form a link with the dead. This ceremonial cannibalism is confined to three or four hordes, but all Arnhem Land nomads attempt to communicate with their dead and call on them for assistance.

Mau's young son slipped from an overhanging tree, and in falling into the water struck his head on a canoe. No one saw the accident and he was not missed till his body drifted downstream to the beach. Two youths carried the corpse to the camp, but by coming into contact with it they had attracted its spirit or 'mali', which lodged in their skin. Before they dared to eat any food they must needs free themselves from the ghost by smearing red-ochre on their arms.

That night the entire camp of several inter-related hordes combined in a ceremony conducted by the child's grandfather. Alternately he wailed and sang a prayer to the spirit of his dead brother, the child's tribal grandfather, asking him to come and take the young spirit to the spirit world of 'Buralkor'. The camp set about preventing the spirit or mali from haunting them, and drove it from the camp by switching their bodies with heated leafy twigs.

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OII7 Murngin OII7

764 Next day the grandfather painted totemic symbols on the body, and women relatives wailed and gashed their heads. About a mile from the camp the child's tribal 'grandsons' constructed the exposure-platform for the body, a very simple structure consisting of forked sticks to support the platform five feet high. Beneath it they scooped a depression so that anything falling from the dissolution might be easily buried.

In the late afternoon everyone gathered about this [535] platform. Relatives danced and the women wailed and performed their characteristic body-swaying and rhythmical shuffling from one foot to the other. A tribal 'grandson' climbed to the platform to arrange the body and covered it with leaves, twigs and bark so that birds could not disturb it. As this was nearing completion, the grandfather burst into a wailing dirge, calling on the spirits of his father and brother to come and take the child to the spirit-land. The child's father and uncles also danced toward the platform, urging the young spirit to depart for Buralkor.

765 At the end of four days we went back in the early morning for the bones of the child. Men sat in one group, and women in another, near the body, on the crest of a sand dune overlooking a wide billowing jungle which fell away toward the leaden, hazy sea from which the sun was rising. To the accompaniment of a desultory singing-wail, the platform was lowered and the tribal 'grandsons' collected the bones. A breeze blowing in from the sea left no doubt about the state of the body, and a concerted move was made to scratch together fallen eucalypt leaves, which the women lit with firesticks. The resulting pungent aroma of burning gum leaves was very welcome. Actual dismemberment was realistic enough; bones and joints were raised and beaten with sticks until separated into lengths suitable for wrapping in bark bundles. Refuse, twigs, and bark were dropped into the depression under the platform, and the heavy forked

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sticks were pulled out and thrown on the heap to deter inquisitive dingoes. 765

Meantime the grandfather sang songs appropriate to the departing spirit, the most important being the plover song. A plover is a spirit from Buralkor disguised with feathers so that mortals may see it, and its purpose is to guide human spirits on their way to the spirit world. Native-companions, geese, jungle fowls, and cockatoos are similarly revered by the Yiritja moiety, except that they have no qualms about eating them. Moreover, these are genuine birds and not visible spirits like the plover. Their importance lies in their supernatural ability to see spirits and to assist them. 765 533 825 [075]

As the grandfather sang the bird-songs, his sons accompanied him with clap-sticks and women danced and made the bird-signs. For the plover they held their hands in front of their shoulders with the fingers half clenched like talons; this gesture is also used ordinarily in their sign-language to indicate death, a corpse, or wandering ghost. Geese were introduced by imitating their cries and by holding short sticks between the hands for bird-perches. Long-winged native-companions could not be mistaken when the dancers extended their arms and flapped them. At the end of the ceremony a tribal-mother carried the bones to her camp and deposited them in the fork of a tree; in bush-camps such parcels can be seen in trees or in forked sticks. Skulls are of more importance and are painted and hoarded for as long as ten years. 765 535 201 825 765

It is usual to expose infants and to bury older children and adults, though no particular significance is attached to either method and both are preliminaries to the collecting of the skeleton. A corpse is buried in a shallow grave face downwards to facilitate the removal of the bones by lifting the backbone to which the greater part of the skeleton is attached. Bones may be collected in four or five days, a week or several months after burial, depending on the regard the [766] [064]

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horde had for the deceased. In decimated hordes, and in the case of aged and unwanted wives, I have known bodies to be left in the ground and no attempt made to remove them.

Until bones have been collected and a mother is 'purified' she remains smeared with red-ochre and leads an inactive life. Relatives feed her and carry water from the well so that she will not desecrate it, for her child's ghost hovers near her and may attach itself to anything she handles. Similarly the relative who dismembers the body is tabu because of the ghost lodging in his skin, and he also is barred from waterholes and from feeding himself and becomes dependent on the hospitality of the family of the corpse. They are expected to treat him well even to the extent of making presents in return for the favour he has done them in attending to the corpse and running the risk of absorbing the ghost. Consequently there is no difficulty in getting 'grandsons' to run these risks, and the father not infrequently declines several offers and even limits the number of morticians to two or three.

This final purification ceremony is similar to the 'mumbakuta' described in Chapter 5. Food is deposited in a totemic well conveniently scooped in the sand, and from this a ceremonial meal is eaten by the victims of the tabu and by certain near relatives. Waste food is piled into the well and burnt, to prevent dingoes disturbing it, and the tabu is finally lifted and the ghost removed when the relatives heat leafy twigs in a fire and switch their bodies. Alternatively, water or sand may be poured over the 'unclean' as they stand in the totemic well and smear themselves with red-ochre.

All deaths are regarded with a certain amount of suspicion, but the death of an active warrior is always attributed to sorcery. In such case the body is left in the ground for a very short time before the bones are collected. Smaller ones are

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given to relatives, and by accepting them they pledge themselves to avenge the death of their kinsman. Bones are also worn as hunting-charms; the ghost follows the bone and guides the wearer to good hunting. Skeletons carried in canoes or sheltered in huts transfer their ghost to anything they touch, and rarely are they allowed to come into contact with private property.

Tabus are lifted by switching away the ghost with smoking twigs. This common 'muntja' ceremony is performed whenever news of a death reaches a camp, perhaps months after it has occurred, otherwise the roaming, mischievous ghost might haunt them indefinitely. Men are most particular in taking part in the ghost-laying practices, otherwise the ghost would trail them when hunting, and as animals can see these spirits it would not be possible to stalk and spear game.

An accepted etiquette is observed in breaking news of death. With an air of mystery the messenger imparts his information to two or three of the older men, and often it is ten or twelve hours before they divulge the news in open camp. I saw a man bring such news and tell it by signs to a few old men who agreed to keep the secret till they arranged the ghost-placating ceremony, and no one heard about it till the coterie commenced to sing for the unmistakable 'muntja'. Performers then derived great satisfaction from the furore; the rest of the camp ran to inquire about the death and to join in the laying of the ghost.

Dead nomads' names are never repeated, though reference to them can be made by signs or by relationship terms. If the restless ghost heard its old familiar name it would probably lodge in the camp or in the body of the person using it. A nomad with a dead man's name will change it or be referred to under a class-name. A little girl, Milly-milly, had her euphonious name changed to Arrung-giddy-niddy after the death of an older Milly-milly. The child appreciated

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551 the distinction, and when I forgot the new name and used the old one she remained naïvely silent till correctly addressed.

775 Appropriate names are given to wandering ghosts, though 'mali', 'morquoi' and 'warru' are the most comon. Mali [192] and morquoi are also used for reflections in water or in a mirror, and warru is applied to any shade or shadow. Ghosts roam at will, hunting and fishing, gathering yams and cooking them; strange events, unaccountable fires, a falling tree, and unrecognizable footprints can all be attributed to mali. At times a mali deserts a skeleton and hovers round a mother's camp, and should she find that her food has disappeared, she is happy in the belief that her dead child's shadow came to her when hungry.

'Birrimbirr' is the second spirit found in every individual. [194] Birrimbirr come from the spirit world of Buralkor, and at death relatives urge them to return there. Irrespective of the life lived on earth, birrimbirr return to Buralkor, and good and bad spirits live there in hordes as they do on earth.

[196] Buralkor lies beyond the rising sun and is the home of the [821] Great Spirit who sent out the first creative Ancestresses. The sun comes from the spirit land and goes back again each night to suckle her infant. On its flight to Buralkor a spirit first sees a cloud rising from the sea and later it resolves itself into a dense jungle with every leaf holding a sparkling dewdrop. On approaching the trees, the birrimbirr finds an opening, and a plover guides it through the branches to the camp of its horde's spirits, where it is welcomed and it settles down to a happy life of hunting. Birrimbirr are able to see what is taking place on earth, and from time to time they hear earthly relatives calling for help and for them to go and pilot in another spirit.

● 765 With both mali and birrimbirr safely disposed of, the bones are smeared with red-ochre, and involved totemic symbols

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are painted on the clean smooth skull. Bones are often 765 ●
carried for years in long bark parcels, and women wail over
them at any hour of the day or night. Once this poignancy
passes, the ceremonies are completed, and an inter-tribal [628]
gathering is regarded as suitable for a bone-burial; several
skeletons may be interred in the one post. These long hollow
burial-posts are cut from the hollow trunks of gum trees,
scraped smooth, and carefully painted with designs and [531]
symbols descriptive of totem centres. Mourning ceremonies
are conducted each night until the bones are packed inside;
skulls and large bones are broken up to conserve space and
each bone is realistically rammed into place. At one burial
ceremony I could not understand why one horde painted
the skull and another horde dressed body bones, and it
was explained that the bones belonged to one horde and
the skull to another. This skull should have been interred
ten years previously, when the skeleton was packed in a
burial post, but the women did not want to part with it
and had kept it till the present ceremony.

With a shout men close in on the burial post and run with it to a small hole in the sand, where it is erected and rammed into place, to stand about twelve feet above ground. In a frenzy of emotion, men dance round it in a final benediction and are encouraged by intensified wailing from the women. An unnatural silence follows the dance, for it concludes abruptly when the leader says simply: 'It is finished.' No further interest is taken in the bones even if the post later topples over and they are scattered on the sand.

Skeletons on the Wessel Islands and Woodah Island are deposited in caves. Scores of bats hung from the roof and fluttered into the sunlight when I went into this cave of the dead on Woodah Island. Skulls lay around in all stages of disintegration, and on the floor there was a pile of bone dust almost two feet high. A large horde once lived here, but 361
now, apart from those who occasionally come over from the

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POWERFUL PADDLERS

During cyclonic weather five Yulengor paddled 150 miles, past hostile islands, to get medical aid for the author

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INTERMENT

Skeletons being placed in a burial post

[facing P135]

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

Stone Age Religion

IT IS OFTEN asked if aboriginals are religious and if there is an aboriginal religion. That 'man is a religious animal' and that he is 'incurably religious' are theories that have been widely accepted. Nevertheless it is surprising to discover the extent of aboriginal religious beliefs. Their beliefs are primitive, yet they include the early forms of most well-known religions, and cover to an astonishing degree much of the content in fundamental religion. Religion may be defined in many terms, but a score or more of these widely varying definitions cover the indefinite scope of aboriginal beliefs. Aboriginal religion is one of 'beginnings', and the sum total of his beliefs resolves itself into a deep well of proto-religion in which is found fetishism, tabu, magic, awe, fear, totemism, and prayer to departed human spirits.

Fetishism includes the belief that supernatural powers may be harnessed by wearing a charm of hair, skin, blood, or bone taken from the body of a dead man.[1] Wandering spirits are feared, the world is full of them and unexplained happenings are attributed to them.[2]

Tabus are carefully observed and ceremonial abstinence is dependent on the fear of definite consequences[3] whilst, because of its negative reaction, Stone Age men refrain from doing certain things for fear of the evil that will come upon them, as when women abstain from eating men's food and from hunting their game during menstruation.[4]

[1] Chapter 5, 'Jungle Lore and Etiquette.'
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Chapter 6, 'From Hand to Mouth.'
[4] Chapter 5, 'Jungle Lore and Etiquette.'